

Message Text

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AMCONSUL MILAN

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USIA FOR ICS MIKE SCHNEIDER; IWE FOR JULIET ANTUNES; SECSTATE
FOR CU/ARTS - SOLMSEN

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: VENICE BIENNALE COMMISSION MEETING MAY 30,31,
JUNE 1, 1975.

REF: ROME 15933 NOV. 1974

PLEASE PASS FOLLOWING TO TAYLOR SMITHSONIAN

1. POST RECEIVED CALL FROM VENICE BIENNALE OFFICE ANNOUNCING
MEETING OF PAVILION PROPRIETORS SCHEDULED MAY 30, 31, JUNE
1 TO FOLLOW UP MEETINGS LAST JULY AND OCTOBER (SEE REFTEL.)

2. MUSEUM OF MODERN ART INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVE,
BUT WE UNAWARE THEIR PLANS TO PARTICIPATE. USIS AGAIN PREPARED
TO REPRESENT U.S. POSITION AT MEETING, IF NECESSARY.

3. CHIEF ISSUES OF CONTROVERSY OCTOBER MEETING WERE (1)
UTILIZATION AND FINANCING OF NATIONAL PAVILIONS AND (2)
PROCESS OF SELECTION OF PARTICIPATING ARTISTS.

A) BIENNALE DIRECTORSHIP PROPOSED THE EXTENSIVE REMODELING
AND ADAPTATION OF NATIONAL PAVILIONS TO QUOTE ATELIER FORMAT
UNQUOTE AS PART OF NEW LOOK PROMOTED BY BIENNALE WHILE ASSURING
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PROPRIETORS OF CONTINUED RESPECT FOR PROPERTY RIGHTS.

HOWEVER ALL EXPENSES WERE TO BE BORNE BY PROPRIETORS.

B) BIENNALE DIRECTORSHIP ALSO CLAIMED PREROGATIVE UNDER ITALIAN LEGISLATION OF 1972 TO SELECT THE REPRESENTATIVE ARTISTS FROM PARTICIPATING NATIONS.

C) LARGE MAJORITY OF REPRESENTATIVES OF NATIONAL PAVILIONS STRONGLY FAVORED CONTINUING MAJOR ROLE IN DISPOSITION AND USE OF THEIR PAVILION AS WELL AS IN SELECTION OF ARTISTS REPRESENTING THEIR COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY BALING AT BIENNALE'S INSISTENCE THAT PROPRIETORS FINANCE CHANGES DESIRED BY BIENNALE.

D) U.S. POINTS, I.E., THAT PROPRIETARY RIGHTS TO PAVILION WOULD BE RETAINED BY MOMA WHILE USE OF PAVILION BE TURNED OVER TO BIENNALE'S DIRECTION (AT BIENNALE'S EXPENSE) AND THAT ALL PARTICIPATING ARTISTS BE SELECTED BY A CENTRAL COMMITTEE, WERE FAVORED BY FEW OTHERS PRESENT. IN FACT MAJOR NATIONS SUCH AS GERMANY EXPRESSES SOME SURPRISE AT UNILATERAL NATURE THESE POINTS. SMALLER NATIONS FEARED EXCLUSION FROM BIENNALE UNLESS ASSURED OF CONTROL OF OWN PAVILION AND SELECTION OF OWN ARTISTS. BIENNALE FAVORED US GESTURE OF OFFERING PAVILION, BUT IN LIGHT OF SERIOUS FINANCIAL PLIGHT OF BIENNALE DID NOT GREET WITH ENTHUSIASM US PROPOSAL OF US WITHDRAWAL OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PAVILION.

E) IN ABSENCE OF SPECIFIC BIENNALE PROGRAM TO BE PRESENTED BY REPRESENTATIVES TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS WITH PRECISE FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS OUTLINED BY BIENNALE, OCTOBER MEETING ENDED INCONCLUSIVELY, AND 1974 CLOSED WITHOUT THE MAJOR EXPOSITION OF MODERN ART TRADITIONALLY HELD EVERY EVEN-NUMBERED YEAR.

4) DURING THE SIX MONTHS SINCE THE OCTOBER MEETING THE BIENNALE HAS CONTINUED TO BE WRACKED BY ITS INVOLVEMENT IN BOTH LOCAL AND NATIONAL POLITICS, AND THOUGH SOME "OFF-SITE" PROGRAMS (MAINLY IN CINEMA AND THEATER) HAVE BEEN PURSUED, THE QUESTION OF THE DISPOSITION OF THE PAVILIONS HAS REMAINED UNRESOLVED, AND NOW THE BIENNALE NO LONGER CONCEALS THE EXTENT OF ITS FINANCIAL STRAITS. NEWS REPORTS INDICATE ITS READINESS TO COMPROMISE ON SEVERAL KEY ISSUES, BUT WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN OF THIS.

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5. REQUEST ADVISE IF US POINTS REMAIN ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS THE SIX POINTS RELAYED FROM DR. TAYLOR TO CAO ARNDT BY PHONE LAST OCTOBER. ALSO REQUEST ADVICE AS TO WHETHER THESE POINTS CAN BE CONSIDERED A POSITION, AND IF SO WHAT BACK-UP POSITIONS MIGHT BE TAKEN IN EVENT NEGOTIATION DEVELOPS. ANY INFORMATION ON MOMA PLANS WOULD ALSO BE APPRECIATED. AMERSON

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